WHAT IS THE USDA LOCAL WORKING GROUP?

Local Working Groups assist the USDA in matters relating to the implementation and technical aspects of conservation programs under Title II of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill). The Local Working Group may be composed of the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), agricultural producers representing the variety of crops and livestock or poultry raised within the local area, nonindustrial private forest land owners, and other professionals representing relevant agricultural and conservation interests and a variety of disciplines in the soil, water, plant, wetland, and wildlife sciences who are familiar with private land agricultural and natural resource issues in the local community. The Local Working Group can include representatives from the following:

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- National Institute of Food and Agricultural (University of Maine Cooperative Extension)
- District Forester (Maine Forest Service)
- State Water Resources Agency (Maine Department of Environmental Protection)
- Local Soil and Water Conservation District
- Agricultural producers representing the variety of crops and livestock or poultry raised within the SWCD area
- Owners of non-industrial private forestland in the SWCD area
- Nonprofit organizations within the meaning of section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with demonstrable conservation expertise and experience working with agricultural producers in the SWCD area
- Agribusiness in the SWCD area

Responsibilities of the Local Working Group

The Local Working Group meets to provide information, analysis, and recommendations to USDA officials charged with implementing the conservation provisions of Title II. The role of the Local Working Group is advisory in nature, and has no implementation or enforcement authority. However, the USDA shall give strong consideration to the recommendations of the Local Working Group in administering the programs under Title II.

Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.)

The Local Working Group is exempt from the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.). For the purposes of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Local Working Groups established under this subtitle shall be considered to be a subcommittee of the State Technical Committee.

Public Notice and Attendance

Local Working Group meetings are announced via public notice and public attendance is permitted.